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Second Summit of the Americas

Santiago Declaration

The following document is the complete text of the Declaration of Santiago signed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Second Summit of the Americas:

We, the democratically-elected Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Americas, have met in Santiago, Chile, in order to continue the dialogue and strengthen the cooperation we began in Miami in December 1994. Since that time, significant progress has been made in the formulation and execution of joint plans and programs in order to take advantage of the great opportunities before us. We reaffirm our will to continue this most important undertaking, which requires sustained national efforts and dynamic international cooperation.

The strengthening of democracy, political dialogue, economic stability, progress towards social justice, the extent to which our trade liberalization policies coincide, and the will to expedite a process of ongoing Hemispheric integration have made our relations more mature. We will redouble our efforts to continue reforms designed to improve the living conditions of the peoples of the Americas and to achieve a mutually supportive community. For this reason, we have decided that education is a key theme and is of particular importance in our deliberations. We approve the attached Plan of Action and undertake to carry out its initiatives.

Since our meeting in Miami, we have seen real economic benefits in the Americas resulting from more open trade, transparency in economic regulations, sound, market-based economic policies, as well as efforts by the private sector to increase its competitiveness. Even as countries in our region have been tested by financial and other economic pressures, and as countries in other regions have experienced serious economic setbacks, the overall course in the Americas has been one of faster economic growth, lower inflation, expanded opportunities, and confidence in facing the global marketplace. A major reason for this positive record has been our countries' steadfast and cooperative efforts to promote prosperity through increased economic integration and more open economies. New partnerships have been formed and existing ones strengthened and expanded. A positive role is being played by sub-regional and bilateral integration and free trade agreements. We are confident that the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) will improve the well-being of all our people, including economically disadvantaged populations within our respective countries.

Hemispheric integration is a necessary complement to national policies aimed at overcoming lingering problems and obtaining a higher level of development. In its broadest sense, a process of integration based on respect for cultural identities will make it possible to shape a common, interwoven set of values and interests that helps us in these objectives.

Globalization offers great opportunities for progress to our countries and opens up new areas of cooperation for the hemispheric community. However, it can also heighten the differences among countries and within our societies. With steadfast determination to reap its benefits and to face its challenges, we will give special attention to the most vulnerable countries and social groups in the Hemisphere.

Education is the determining factor for the political, social, cultural, and economic development of our peoples. We undertake to facilitate access of all inhabitants of the Americas to preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education, and we will make learning a lifelong process. We will put science and technology at the service of education to assure growing levels of knowledge and so that educators may develop their skills to the highest level. The Plan of Action that accompanies this Declaration defines the objectives and goals we intend to achieve and the actions that will make them a reality. In order to meet our goals within the agreed timeframes, we reaffirm our commitment to invest greater resources in this important area, and to encourage civil society to participate in developing education.

The decisions adopted by our Ministers of Education at the Conference held in Mérida, Mexico, last February, reflect our desire to promote specific joint initiatives designed to improve access to education, with fairness, quality, relevancy, and effectiveness. In order to consolidate and lend continuity to our decisions, we have instructed that another Conference be held in Brasilia, Brazil, in July of this year.

Today, we direct our Ministers Responsible for Trade to begin negotiations for the FTAA, in accordance with the March 1998 Ministerial Declaration of San José. We reaffirm our determination to conclude the negotiation of the FTAA no later than 2005, and to make concrete progress by the end of the century. The FTAA agreement will be balanced, comprehensive, WTO-consistent and constitute a single undertaking.

We note with satisfaction the preparatory work by the Ministers Responsible for Trade over the past three years which has strengthened our trade policies, fostered understanding of our economic objectives and facilitated dialogue among all participating countries. We appreciate the significant contribution of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), acting as the Tripartite Committee.

The FTAA negotiating process will be transparent, and take into account the differences in the levels of development and size of the economies in the Americas, in order to create the opportunities for the full participation by all countries. We encourage all segments of civil society to participate in and contribute to the process in a constructive manner, through our respective mechanisms of dialogue and consultation and by presenting their views through the mechanism created in the FTAA negotiating process. We believe that economic integration, investment, and free trade are key factors for raising standards of living, improving the working conditions of the people of the Americas and better protecting the environment. These issues will be taken into account as we proceed with the economic integration process in the Americas.

The region has made significant advances in both monetary and fiscal policy as well as in price stability and liberalizing our economies. The volatility of capital markets vindicates our decision to strengthen banking supervision in the Hemisphere and to establish regulations relating to disclosure and reporting of banking information.

The strength and meaning of representative democracy lie in the active participation of individuals at all levels of civic life. The democratic culture must encompass our entire population. We will strengthen education for democracy and promote the necessary actions for government institutions to become more participatory structures. We undertake to strengthen the capabilities of regional and local governments, when appropriate, and to foster more active participation in civil society.

Respect for and promotion of human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all individuals is a primary concern of our governments. In commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we agree on the need to promote the ratification and implementation of the international agreements aimed at preserving them and to continue strengthening the pertinent national and international institutions. We agree that a free press plays a fundamental role in this area and we reaffirm the importance of guaranteeing freedom of expression, information, and opinion. We commend the recent appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, within the framework of the Organization of American States.

Confident that an independent, efficient, and effective administration of justice plays an essential role in the process of consolidating democracy, strengthens its institutions, guarantees the equality of all its citizens, and contributes to economic development, we will enhance our policies relating to justice and encourage the reforms necessary to promote legal and judicial cooperation. To that end, we will strengthen national entities involved in the study of the administration of justice and expedite the establishment of a hemispheric center for studies on this subject.

We will combat all forms of discrimination in the Hemisphere. Equal rights and opportunities between men and women and the objective of ensuring active participation of women in all areas of national endeavor are priority tasks. We will continue to promote the full integration of indigenous populations and other vulnerable groups into political and economic life, with due respect for the characteristics and expressions that affirm their cultural identity. We will make a special effort to guarantee the human rights of all migrants, including migrant workers and their families.

Overcoming poverty continues to be the greatest challenge confronted by our Hemisphere. We are conscious that the positive growth shown in the Americas in past years has yet to resolve the problems of inequity and social exclusion. We are determined to remove the barriers that deny the poor access to proper nutrition, social services, a healthy environment, credit, and legal title to their property. We will provide greater support to micro and small enterprises, promote core labor standards recognized by the International Labor Organization (ILO), and use new technologies to improve the health conditions of every family in the Americas, with the technical support of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), achieving greater levels of equity and sustainable development.

With deep satisfaction, we note that peace, an essential value for human coexistence, is a reality in the Hemisphere. We underscore that Central America has become a zone of peace, democracy, and development and we recognize efforts to eliminate antipersonnel mines and to rehabilitate their victims. We will continue to foster confidence and security among our countries through such measures as those mentioned in the Santiago and San

Salvador Declarations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. We encourage the pacific settlement of disputes.

We will lend new impetus to the struggle against corruption, money laundering, terrorism, weapons trafficking, and the drug problem, including illicit use, and work together to ensure that criminals do not find safe haven anywhere in the Hemisphere. We are determined to persevere in this direction.

In forging an alliance against drugs and applying the Hemispheric Anti-Drug Strategy, we welcome the start of formal negotiations at the May 4 meeting of Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) to be held in Washington within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), to establish an objective procedure for the multilateral evaluation of actions and cooperation to prevent and combat all aspects of the drug problem and related crimes, based on the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity of States, shared responsibility, and with a comprehensive and balanced approach.

We will strengthen national, hemispheric, and international efforts aimed at environmental protection as a basis for sustainable development that provides human beings a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. The commitments undertaken at the Miami Summit and the Summit on Sustainable Development held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, provide a solid basis for strengthening our actions. As parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we underscore the importance of working together to further fulfillment of the agreement reached at the Conference in Kyoto, Japan, and to promote its ratification in our countries. Moreover, we will work closely to make preparations for a Conference of the Parties to be held in November of this year in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

We acknowledge that the development of energy links between our countries and the intensification of trade in the energy sector strengthen and foster the integration of the Americas. Energy integration, based on competitive and transparent activities, and in compliance with national conditions and objectives, contributes to the sustainable development of our nations and to the improvement of the quality of life of our people with minimum impact on the environment.

Recognizing the importance of, and positive role played by hemispheric institutions, particularly the Organization of American States (OAS), we instruct our Ministers to examine the strengthening and modernizing of these institutions.

We reaffirm our will to continue strengthening intra-hemispheric dialogue and cooperation within the framework of friendship and solidarity that inspires our nations.

Done in Santiago, Chile, on this the 19th day of April, 1998, in the Spanish, French, English and Portuguese languages.